(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government have made any arrangement so that the patients may not face any inconvenience in case of electricity failure?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the Sabha.

Inclusion of Diabetic Medicines in the Life Saving Category

†498. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI:
SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to include the medicines and equipments required for the treatment of diabetes into life saving category in the new National Health Policy keeping in view the fear of incidents of diseases like heart disease, kidney failure, blood pressure, infection, blindness and sex problem in most of the diabetic patients in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA): (a) and (b) The National Health Policy 2002 emphasizes the need for basing treatment regimens in both the public and private domain, on a limited number of essential drugs of a generic nature. It has also emphasized that the list of essential drugs would have to be reviewed periodically.

Health Risk by Genetically Modified Crops

†499. DR. ABRAR AHMED:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are many genetically modified crops that are being produced which may carry health risk;

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the tests conducted for such crops that may carry health risks; and

(c) a list of such crops that are being produced that may have health risk associated with them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) to (c) Regulation of the production of the Genetically Modified Crops including environmental release has been laid down under statutory provision of Environmental Protection Act, 1986. Under the rule of the manufacture, use, Import and Storage of Hazardous Micro-organisms/Genetically Engineered Organizers or cell, 1989 notified under the Environmental Act, 1986 food stuff, ingredients in food stuffs and additives including processing aids containing or consisting or genetically engineered organisms or cells shall not be produced, sold, imported or used except with the approval of the Genetic Engineering Approvals Committee.

The Genetically Modified products that are currently in the international market have to pass risk assessment conducted by national authorities of the countries where they are permitted. As per the WHO, the safety assessment of Genetically Modified foods generally investigate (a) direct health effects (toxicity); (b) tendencies to provoke allergic reaction (allergenicity); (c) specific components thought to have nutritional or toxic properties; (d) the stability of the inserted gene; (e) nutritional effects associated with genetic modification; and (f) any unintended effects which could result from the gene insertion.

All genetically modified foods are evaluated for health risk. The Maize variety "Starlink" developed in the USA was one such genetically Modified crop that was withdrawn from the market in USA and Japan because of suspected health risk. In India only BT cotton has been permitted, after extensive tests and risk assessments, to be commercially produced and marketed.